

City of Morgantown
Human Rights Commission
Meeting Minutes February 20, 2014

Present: Jan Derry Dave Bott, Administrative Representative
Michael Fike Tim Hairston – Liaison w. State HRC
Brian Jara
Anne Marlene Robinson-Savino
Don Spencer, Chair
Fran Whiteman

Meeting called to order by Don Spencer, Chair, at 6:35 p.m. New member Brian Jara, Director of the WVU Women and Gender Studies program, was welcomed and introduced. Anne Marie Lofaso had reported that she would not be able to attend. .

Announcements: Tim Hairston reported on the deaths of Judge Carter, Director of the State Human Rights Commission and her husband, a former president of West Virginia State University, during the past month. Mary Kay Jacquet, Deputy State Director of the HRC, is expected to serve as Acting Director until a new HRC Director is appointed.

The Commission, on a motion by Jan Derry, seconded by Fran Whiteman, voted to send a letter of appreciation to the Community Coalition for Social Justice in honor of their outstanding work on the annual MLK Day events.

The forthcoming Empty Bowls and Housing Roundtable events were announced.

Tim Hairston announced that there would be no State HRC sponsored housing education event in Monongalia County this spring due to the death of Judge Carter.

Minutes of the January HRC Meeting: The minutes of the regular meeting on January 16 were reviewed. The attendance record for the meeting was corrected. On a motion by Jan Derry, seconded by Mike Fike, the January minutes were approved by vote without dissent.

Communications: Don Spencer distributed copies of articles which had been published on the City's action on the resolutions from California, Indiana, New York, and West Virginia. He also distributed a copy of the letter to the City CDBG Director regarding a budget request for the next fiscal year. In addition it was reported that the City Manager has approved the HRC 2013 Annual Report for distribution. The City Publications Director provided a written report stating the City is working with the City's I.T. contractor toward making the City web site more accessible and "Bobby Approved".

Reports on the HRC Resolutions and the 1/28 and 2/4 City Council Meetings: Mike Fike as well as Fran Whiteman and Anne Marie – Lofaso were commended for the excellent work on the resolution submissions to the City Council. Jan Derry reported that due to the year being an election year for the State Legislator, it does not appear that there

will be any action on the “Gay Bill” and HB 2856 is being called in the corridors at the Capitol. Don Spencer reported on his communication with the Fairness WV organization as well as his communications with legislators when distributing the HRC resolutions packets at the Capitol.

Human Rights Need Survey: It was reported that thus far that there have been approximately 100 hard copy survey’s completed and 100 on-line surveys on the City web site.

The Commission members reviewed the full list of some 50 prospective survey partner organizations to assign members contacts and expanded the list to include the Bartlett House and Transit Authority were added to the list. The question was raised as to whether Facebook access should be included. The next survey face-to-face event will be at the Empty Bowls gathering on February 22. Bob Jones as been making the arrangements with Dr. Cory Faris, this year’s Empty Bowls chair.

WVU Community Human Rights Film Festival: A human rights film festival had been on the HRC docket for approximately one year. In January the concept was developed in writing into a proposed draft plan for the HRC with the possibly of its being submitted to the WVU Division of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in order to involve both community and the university participation in an ongoing annual human rights film festival. The members reviewed each component of the proposal and supported its being explored first with David Fryson of the WVU Division of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. Should it not be a viable for his office to sponsor, Spencer suggested several other potential sponsorships on the WVU campus. Robinson-Savino recommended that whoever sponsors the event that it be schedule during the fall semester.

The HRC and the City would be responsible for 1) participating on an annual planning committee, 2) supporting publicity of film showings, and 3) requesting in kind arrangements for showing films in community locations as needed. There would not be any financial commitment of city funding, but it was agreed that providing a full opportunity for community residents to participate would be important.

Spencer was setting up a meeting with David Fryson to discuss the Human Rights Film Festival as well as the Human Rights Need Survey distribution and assistance on the HRC’s Affirmative Action Plan project planned for later in the next fiscal year. He will report back to the Commission at the next meeting.

Docket, Calendar, Commissioner Reports and “Tools”: The Commissioners reviewed the updated HRC docket and calendar and noted that February is the months for the annual meeting of the State Human Rights Commission. Hairston stated that he would be attending the meeting on the 26th and 27th of February and providing a report to the Commission at its next meeting. Jan Derry said that there will be information on a locally developed housing conference in the spring available at the next meeting as well.

In the Commissioner reports, Fran Whiteman posed the question of how does the HRC help maintain the momentum on the resolutions unto next year? Mike Fike concurred and raised the issue about the need to strengthen the HRC's relationship with the adult and student chapters of the NAACP. Marlene Robinson had not report at this time. Dave Bott and Tim Hairston raised the questions on whether on not it would be possible to engender greater awareness of inclusivity issues in the Hardesty Festival of Ideas Speaker Series and in the Peace Tree Celebration events. Brian Jara spoke of the campus progress being made on LGBT issues with the assistance of David Fryson and Gordon Gee regarding the launching of a LGBT center on campus, creating gender neutral facility options, and the development of an alumni group for LGBT alumni.

The next meeting will be held on March 20, 2014.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:35 p. m.